

Information and Activity Report

CBRM Regional Enterprise Network

Q4 – fiscal 2023/24
(January - March 2024)

Subject: CBRM REN Information and Activity Report
To: Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Date Prepared: April 12, 2024 (small corrections on May 6th)
Prepared by: Tyler Cole, Economic Development Officer, CBRM
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Background:

The Cape Breton Partnership (CBP) provides economic development support to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality under the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional Enterprise Network (CBRM REN) serves all of the communities of the CBRM from the CBP offices in Sydney.

The CBRM REN is part of a larger network of Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia.

The CBP maximizes the value of the CBRM REN's funding partners, leverages that investment to have a greater impact, and collaborates with other partners, funders, and projects that it is responsible for (like the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership) to deliver operational synergies across Unama'ki – Cape Breton and to benefit the CBRM.

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2023/24 CBRM REN Board of Directors

- **Chair** - Tracey Boutilier, Vibe Creative Group
- Brad Jacobs, Colbourne Auto Group
- Shaowei Xu, SW East Trading
- Howie Doiron, Lindsay Construction
- Darrell Gallant, Marine Atlantic Inc.
- Nicole Morrison, Mabel Systems
- Ron Blinkhorn, Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney

2023/24 CBRM REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- **Co-Chair** – Steve Gillespie, Councillor, CBRM
- Steve Parsons, Councillor, CBRM
- Karen Neville, Acting Director of Planning and Development, CBRM
- **Co-Chair** – Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, CBRM
- Ross MacDonald, Government of Nova Scotia
- TBD, Government of Nova Scotia

Additional information about the CBRM REN

Full information on the CBRM REN, including the CBRM Forward Strategic Plan, annual business plan, quarterly reports and more is located on the [CBRM REN webpage](#).

Reporting Period:

Your CBRM REN team and the CBP are pleased to share highlights, milestones achieved, and metrics from **January 1 – March 31, 2024**.

Highlights and Events:

- **International Council of Shopping Centers Conference in Whistler, BC 21-23 January** – Cape Breton Partnership representatives attended this retail conference, which focuses on shopping, dining, recreation and similar venues. Like previous years, it was a productive conference with some good connections made. CBP is currently considering whether to attend the ICSC Conference in Toronto in October, which potentially is attended by more developers with an interest in Atlantic Canada.
- **Spotlight on Nova Scotia – Invest in Canada Webinar, 31 January** – Cape Breton Partnership presented to Canadian Trade Commissioners around the world on investment opportunities in Cape Breton. Tyler Cole participated by giving an overview of the opportunities in the offshore wind sector in the CBRM and the potential for Sydney Harbour development.
- **Invest in Cape Breton Podcast** – In March another episode of the *Invest in Cape Breton Podcast* aired. This episode covers the current state of Cape Breton’s housing market, what two developers are doing to address the crisis, and what they think local governments and stakeholders can do to facilitate more housing development. To date, four episodes have been launched:
 - *Episode 1: Innovation Thrives on this Picturesque Island*
 - *Episode 2: An Enormous Opportunity is about to Transform Sydney Harbour*
 - *Episode 3: Strong Winds Driving Growth to the Strait of Canso*
 - *Episode 4: How to build more Housing in Cape Breton*More episodes in the series are continuously being planned. You can listen and subscribe to the podcast on the [Welcome To Cape Breton website here](#).
- **Offshore Wind Community Engagement Sessions** – The Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic have been hosting community information sessions throughout Unama’ki – Cape Breton, to ensure communities are well informed about the topic of offshore wind. Three sessions (Sydney, Glace Bay, and New Waterford) took place in CBRM during the month of March. A summary document for all of the sessions is being prepared by the Green Energy which will be available to the public.
- **Small Business Roundtable** – On March 7, the Partnership organized a “Small Business Roundtable” event during a visit to the CBRM by the federal Minister of Small Business, Rechie Valdez. The event was hosted at Cape Breton Beverages in Edwardsville and brought together a number of local businesses to discuss their challenges and opportunities.
- **Startup 101: So You want to be an Entrepreneur – On March 27**, The Partnership Representative joined the Start up 101 session organized by CEED and led a table discussion on Registrations Permits Licenses and Forms of Business to support International Student Entrepreneurship.

Select Project Updates:

Economic Development Project Updates

- **Louisbourg Waterfront Development** – Discussions are ongoing with potential project partners to maintain a path forward for this project. There is still interest from numerous stakeholders to see this continue and realize a positive outcome.
- **Beechmont Copper Deposit** – The CBRM REN team continues to work with numerous stakeholders, at the direction and consultation from CBRM Staff, to connect Nova Copper with local contacts and resources as they explore their opportunity surrounding this project’s development. Meetings have been held with community groups including Keep Coxheath Clean to better understand numerous perspectives around the project.
- **Industry Sector Pages** – The CBRM REN team has continued to work on the content for the [Industry Sector Pages](#) on the Welcome to Cape Breton website’s Invest Tab. These pages highlight key areas of focus for investment on the Island. New pages covering residential real estate, commercial real estate, agriculture, farming and food processing, innovation and technology, fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, green energy, and the creative economy will be launching in Spring 2024.
- **Fly Ash Utilization - High-level Engineering Study** – The CBRM REN team has initiated a high level engineering study, in collaboration with InvestNS, Nova Scotia Power, and local landowners to better understand the export and manufacturing opportunity of the estimated 10 million tonnes of fly ash available from over 40 years of plant operations.
- **C200 / Cape Breton Eagles Economic Impact Study** – The CBRM REN team, in collaboration with CBRM staff and the Cape Breton Eagles released an RFP for two Community Economic Impact Studies on February 26th, to determine the economic impact of the hockey team and the arena on the CBRM. This initiative is an excellent example of collaboration, as it is jointly funded by the CBRM REN, CBRM, the Cape Breton Eagles, and ACOA. More information is in the [RFP on the website here](#).
- **Women + Microloan Program relaunched** – The Women’s Microloan Program was a pilot initiative launched in 2019. Responding to a commitment to inclusivity, the program was rebranded as the [Women + Microloan program](#) in January 2024 and relaunched on January 2. This change reflects our dedication to fostering diversity and empowering all individuals in our community. Promotional efforts have yielded remarkable results, with 26 enthusiastic applicants stepping forward to seize this opportunity until the end of March.

Creative Economy Projects and Sector Initiatives

- **Smithsonian Institution MOU** - The Creative Economy Development Officer (CEDO) has been working with CBU professor of Ethnomusicology Marcia Ostashevski on an MOU with the Smithsonian Institution that will benefit Unama’ki - Cape Breton musicians with worldwide distribution on the respected Smithsonian Folkways record label, commencing with the Sons of Membertou, being released in Washington DC on July 1, 2024
- **Unama’ki – Cape Breton Culture Sector Team** - Bill Culp continues to support the creative sector through support to the Culture Sector Team, which in turn works to continuously implement the objectives of the [Cape Breton Regional Municipality Creative Economy Growth Plan \(2017\)](#) and other CBRM based efforts to grow the culture sector.
- **Creative Awards Night 2024** – Work continues with Todd Hiscock at CBU (Boardmore Theatre) on a Creative Awards Night 2024, and Todd is also a regular member of the Unama’ki – Cape Breton Culture Sector Team.
- **Support to CB MIC** – Collaboration continues as the CEDO supports CB MIC’s Island-wide events including the Cape Breton Music Industry Hall of Fame Event at Centre 200

- **Louisbourg Playhouse** – The CEDO has been assisting the Louisbourg Playhouse with developing a new website, online ticket sales system, funding support, and connections to new performances including:
 - Artist/photographer Gabriel Munoz Ceron, a newcomer to the CBRM from Colombia.
 - Artist/musician Judah Legge, who is working on a songwriter’s festival in Louisbourg featuring artists from Nashville.
 - Videographer/creative content marketer Arden Ong who is launching a promotional video company for businesses.

People and Labour Force Attraction:

- **Cape Breton Job Board** – The [Cape Breton Job Board](#) (made possible in part due to the investment of the CB REN) is currently undergoing a round of updates started in Q4. This update includes a broader Resources page, accessibility features, promotion of the Volunteer and Board opportunities, and a homepage re-brand..
 - The Cape Breton Job Board currently has **218 organizations in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality**.
 - The Job Board can also now be embedded into partner organization’s websites, including the [Cape Breton Partnership’s career page](#).

Welcome Network – [Welcome Network](#) Coordinator Jessica Fogarty departed the role in December 2023. Danielle Casagrande began on March 11, 2024 - with a gap covering most of this quarter, not much activity was undertaken in this role. The inbox was monitored while we were without a Coordinator, and referrals to the CBRM Welcome Group were passed on to the Chair.

Danielle has been meeting with community partners including YREACH, Cape Breton Regional Library, Immigration Francophone, and the Migrant Worker Awareness Partnership Project. Additional partners are being approached, including CBU and NSCC Marconi. A meeting was held with the CBRM Welcome Group, and the WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca has been updated.

- **Immigration Support** – The Cape Breton Partnership has supported many businesses in the CBRM through immigration services, including designations and endorsements under the Atlantic Immigration Program, information about the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, information for entrepreneurs, and immigration advice to newcomers and international students. For more information on immigration services and how we can help, please visit [Immigration Services - Cape Breton Partnership](#)
 - In Q4, our Labour Market & Immigration Advisor submitted 3 designations and 2 endorsements under the Atlantic Immigration Program for employers in the CBRM. As an RCIC, Kelly MacKinnon is listed as the immigration representative for 11 employers in the CBRM.
 - Event – February 28th – **Information Session for Employers, Sydney:** Dani Mombourquette supporting the planning, execution, and advertising of this event, which was held by IRCC. The event was aimed at providing employers with information on immigration and an opportunity to ask questions and build connections.
 - Event – March 27th – **Stay In Nova Scotia After You Graduate:** Aimed at providing students information on the Atlantic Immigration Program and the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, with a specific focus on International Graduate Entrepreneur stream. The event provided information on how to remain in Cape Breton, and could provide future entrepreneurs with the resources to start businesses.

- **Cape Breton Connector Program** – In Q4, the [Cape Breton Connector Program](#) registered 19 new Connectors and 70 new Connectees in the CBRM. The Connector Program Coordinator, Ocean Le, has made many presentations to newcomers, international students, and local students through collaboration with the Welcome Network, CBU and NSCC, and other local settlement partners.
 - Events in Q4 include:
 - February 3rd: **Nigerian Society Meet and Greet**
 - March 14th: **Study and Stay Nova Scotia Networking Social**
 - March 25th: **Virtual Community Networking, Part 1: Rural Networking 101**
 - March 26th: **Voices of Diversity Panel Discussion**
 - March 27th: **immigration Engagement Session Spotligting Connector Program**
 - In-classroom presentations: 3 at CBU, 3 at NSCC
 - Career Fairs and Job Fairs: Attended 2 at CBU, 1 Cape Breton Partnership job fair

Upcoming Events:

- **April 9th - Sydney Job Fair:** The Cape Breton Partnership will be hosting a job fair at the Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion in Sydney on April 9, with employers and job seekers from around the CBRM invited to participate.
- **April 19th - Tourism Training Session Kickoff:** The CBRM EDOs have been invited to participate in the World Tourism Institute’s Tourism Training Session Kickoff event in Membertou on April 19. The team will be sharing results of the recent economic impact study on the Island’s tourism industry.
- **May 6th - The Impact of Transportation Costs on Life & Work in Unama’ki – Cape Breton:** Postponed from February, this event will bring together key stakeholders from government, the transportation sector, and the interested public to discuss how an expansion of transportation opportunities in the region would benefit business and consumers alike.
- **May 16th - CANS Spring Fling:** CBRM REN team will participate in the Construction Association of Nova Scotia’s Spring Fling golf tournament and dinner event at Ben Eoin, to connect with construction sector leaders from across the island, and foster positive relationships between this important group and the CBRM.
- **Lunch & Learn - Government Procurement: May 24** – This event will highlight to attendees some strategies for success in the government procurement space at all three levels. It is open to interested organizations and the general public.
- **MORE EVENTS** - To be kept informed of all upcoming events as they unfold, follow the Cape Breton Partnership’s social channels or [subscribe to the Pulse Newsletter](#).

Metrics Overview *(Full Metrics are available in Addendum 1: CBRM REN Metrics (January 1 – March 31, 2024))*

- Your Economic Development Officers, and CBRM REN team members, continue to provide business support and advisory services to entrepreneurs, business clients, and individuals throughout the CBRM, with 20 client files and economic development projects currently open and in progress.
- [The Women’s Micro Loan program](#) has approved 1 female business in CBRM since relaunched in January 2024. The Micro-Loan Program is a partnership between the Cape Breton Partnership, the East Coast Credit Union and Sydney Credit Union. Successful applicants also receive support from the Strait Area and Cape Breton Regional Chambers of Commerce, the Centre for Women in Business and the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Education and Development.
- The CBRM REN team is currently providing 33 individuals and businesses in the CBRM with immigration and human resources supports, guidance, and direction in an effort to grow our population and to assist employers with labour related challenges.

Additional Information:



CBRM REN Website: Additional information on the CBRM REN, including the CBRM Forward Strategic Plan, annual business plan, quarterly reports and more is located on the [CBRM REN webpage](#).



Welcome to Cape Breton Website: Additional Information on Living, Working, Investing, Studying and Moving to the CBRM - including community profiles and economic data - can be found on the [Welcome to Cape Breton website](#).

- **News and Updates** – Elevate Magazine, and articles from Pulse Newsletter, new podcasts, news releases and more can be found on the [Partnership News section of our website](#).



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Signatures:

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Addendum(s):

- **CBRM REN Metrics (January 1 – March 31, 2024)**

---end report---

Addendum I: CBRM REN Metrics (October 1 – December 31, 2023)

Activities	CBRM Metrics (January 1/24 – March 31/24)			Apr 1/23 – Mar. 31/24
	Total Started	Total In Progress (as of Mar. 31st)	Total Completed	YTD Total Completed
Business Support, Sustainability, & Growth	Total – 55	Total – 54	Total - 4	Total - 78
Business Planning	Service in Transition. At the current time, clients requiring business planning and startup / entrepreneurship are being supported either by the EDOs, or by partners such as Navigate, the MSVU Centre for Women in Business, CEED, or others.			
Business Productivity & Growth Services				3
Business Quick Support	3	2	1	
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory	5	3	2	28
Human Resources Advisory Services				1
Immigration Advisory Services	1	1		15
Immigration Engagement – Business Support	7	7		5
Immigration Engagement – Candidate Support	15	15		
Immigration Quick Support	1	1		2
Immigration Representation	8	10	2	10
Investment & Business Attraction Projects	2	2		6
Micro-Lending	10	10		6
Succession Planning				2
Creative Economy	3	3		

Economic Development Projects & Strategic Sector Support	Total - 0	Total - 1	Total - 1	Total - 1
Sector Analysis (Strength & Weaknesses)				
Other Economic Development Projects		1	1	1

Addressing Talent Needs (Labour & Population)	Total - 33	Total - 135	Total - 10	Total - 35
Human Resources Advisory Services				
Business Immigration Consultancy	12	22	5	13
Immigration Advisory Services	21	113	5	22
Retention Activities	Total - 0	Total - 0	Total - 101	Total - 224
New Connectors	n/a	n/a	19	37
New Connectees	n/a	n/a	70	103
Welcome Network - Welcomed	n/a	n/a	12	84

20240506 CBRM REN Report-Q4-FINAL-SIGNED

Final Audit Report

2024-05-06

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